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CWMTAF

PUBLIC
SERVICES
BOARD



ANNUAL REPORT

2021-22



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One PSB, One Plan for the Future of Cwm Taf Morgannwg





Introduction from the Chair...

This Annual Report is the final one Cwm Taf Public Service Board will produce in relation to the 2018 – 2023 Well-being Plan. When that Plan was published it set out the steps that we would take to meet our Well-being Objectives, the things you said would make a positive difference to your lives; having thriving communities, healthy people, a strong economy and a Cwm Taf where no one felt lonely or isolated. However, the world as we know it now is a very different place to when the Plan was written and the focus of the Board has rightly shifted to meet new and emerging challenges, particularly around the Covid-19 pandemic and more recently the war in Ukraine and the cost-of-living crisis. Against a challenging backdrop, I am very pleased that we are in a position to celebrate progress still being made and this report is a summary of work of the last 12 months.

This will also be the final Annual Report for Cwm Taf as we will be merging with Bridgend to create one Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board ahead of publishing our new Well-being Plan in May 2023 – one Plan, one PSB and one vision for improving well-being in the region.

We will begin work on developing the Plan and creating one Board with a sense of optimism. The Well-being Assessment that we recently published told us that there is a lot to be proud of in Cwm Taf Morgannwg and provides us with a good start for understanding where we need to focus our efforts for the coming five years and beyond. We want to be brave and push for real innovation, to address generational inequalities that exist in the area and to be able to demonstrate the positive difference that we are making as a partnership.

We remain committed to working with our biggest asset – our people and our communities – and look forward to hearing your thoughts on what our priorities need to be, and the steps we should take to meet them as we develop our Well-being Plan.

Mark Brace

*Assistant Police and Crime Commissioner,
South Wales Police*

Doing it Differently

Five Ways of Working

Public Services Boards (PSBs) across Wales are responsible for implementing the **Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015** through the work they undertake. The Act places a duty on each PSB to carry out an assessment of well-being every four years, and then publish their local Well-being Plan. The Cwm Taf Well-being Plan 2018-2023 can be found [here](#).



Under the Act, it is just as important for public services to consider ‘how’ they work and involve citizens in the planning and delivery, not only ‘what’ they deliver. The Act sets out ‘Five Ways of Working’ under the Sustainable Development Principle to tell organisations to meet their responsibilities.

These are:



1 Prevention



2 Integration



3 Collaboration



4 Long term



5 Involvement



The report will set out ‘what we did’ in the last year, with a focus on the five ways of working.

How We Have Worked



1

PREVENTION... how acting to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may help public bodies meet their objectives.

Prior to the pandemic, **Tackling Loneliness and Isolation** was a cross cutting area of work for the PSB and presented opportunities to integrate with our Regional Partnership Board (RPB) around social prescribing, using community assets and befriending services. There is a designated role in Cwm Taf for a **Tackling Loneliness and Isolation Development Officer** in recognition of the impact that we know these feelings can have on our well-being.

The Development Officer has created a new referral pathway to Community / Well-being Coordinators in Interlink RCT and VAMT, creating six 'loneliness champions' at South Wales Fire and Rescue Service stations in Aberdare, Abercynon and Merthyr Tydfil. There is potential for more, and for more public sector bodies to be involved.

The pandemic significantly impacted on all our well-being. We have spoken with people to understand what it's like to live and work in Cwm Taf and heard that all of society faced feelings of loneliness and social isolation as well as potential physical and mental health challenges. These still affect many of us as we return to 'normal life'. **Befriending** groups and services make a huge difference to many people with one of the people supported calling the service "life-saving". The third sector Befriending Network has been established aiming to share best practice, training and joined up delivery of services for people experiencing loneliness. There are currently 35 involved services in the Network.

There has been continued progress regarding the Vulnerability Profile project under our **Healthy People** objective. This work focuses on preventing unplanned pregnancies, supporting children to be school-ready, and reducing the number of children taken into care. The purpose of this work is to enable information sharing between partner organisations to identify pregnant women and children who would benefit from early interventions to prevent poor outcomes for them and their children. The scope was originally from preconception to age 2 - 'First 1000 Days of life' - but has been extended to age seven to ensure that profiles are developed that promote school readiness and transition into and through the foundation phase of education. Through collaboration with partners, research has been carried out about parent-infant relationships and supporting parents to provide the best start in life for their child, which has contributed to this work. As at the end of this reporting year, the RCT pilot project has made significant progress. Highlights include Data Disclosure Agreements signed by CTMUHB, RCTCBC, South Wales Police and SAIL (Secure Anonymised Information Linkage), Swansea University. This has allowed for the electronic transfer of birth data from the Health Board to RCTCBC, rather than the manual input previously used with a high risk of data errors, and included an evidence search for risk factors associated with our agreed priorities to confirm that the data fields selected are accurate. Qualitative research has also been undertaken to gain the views of families and professionals in sharing data across organisations to inform future practice.



As part of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP), RCT were successfully applied for **Safer Streets** funding to tackle the issue of Violence against Women and Girls. This funding allows for interventions that take a holistic approach in the targeted areas and more broadly across the local authority bringing about a wider effect over time to reduce violence against women and girls. This includes improvements to public spaces such as Cae Fardre, Ynys Underpass and Beddau Park. The Digital Bench Scheme has been widened to encourage youths to congregate in pre-planned 'safe spaces' that provide mobile phone connectivity and charging points, reducing vulnerability of women and girls. A community fund has also been introduced to support town and rural communities to drive crime prevention initiatives such as Neighbourhood Watch, provide self-defence lessons and fund minor situational interventions to empower communities to take back their public space and feel safer.

How We Have Worked...

2

INTEGRATION... Considering how the public body's well-being objectives may impact upon each of the well-being goals, on their other objectives or on the objectives of other public bodies.



Partnership working is at the centre of the PSB. It has been the driving force of Covid-19 recovery work. The relationships that started in the PSB allowed organisations to integrate their work and resources to work at pace, work smartly and support communities trying to re-build, re-engage and re-connect.

'Community Hubs' have been developed across the area as a result of the **'Thriving Community'** Objective. A key focus in the last year has been on re-establishing or creating new 'Neighbourhood Networks', supported by Community Co-ordinators and chaired by community leaders. Over 250 groups are engaged in these networks in RCT, and this continues to increase, seeking solutions and ensuring that residents have opportunities to influence developments within communities. During 2021-22 a total of eight external grants provided £335,068 was made available for community groups via the Neighbourhood Networks and Food Support Fund.

Working in Partnership with Bridgend PSB has been one of the biggest foci for Cwm Taf PSB in 2021-22. The Boards have a clear intention to be one, merged PSB for Cwm Taf Morgannwg by the time we come to publish our new regional Well-being Plan in July 2023, and this has been demonstrated in integrating the existing work of the two Boards and their priorities.

Community cohesion and feeling part of an integrated society was a common theme when we undertook our assessment – people like to feel connected, and culture can form a large part of that. The Covid pandemic made this more difficult, but a new group has been set up in Merthyr Tydfil to help support people from Kerala who were feeling isolated from their community. 72 families now have a support network for children and adults to come together through music, dance, and food.



In July 2021 we held a joint PSB/RPB workshop called "The Role of Anchor Organisations in Tackling Inequalities" to look at how organisations can change the way they work to support local communities and businesses. This was facilitated by The Health Foundation and the broad membership and commitment to partnership working set the tone for the assessment work.



How We Have Worked...

3

COLLABORATION... Acting in collaboration with any other person (or different parts of the body itself) that could help the body to meet its well-being objectives.



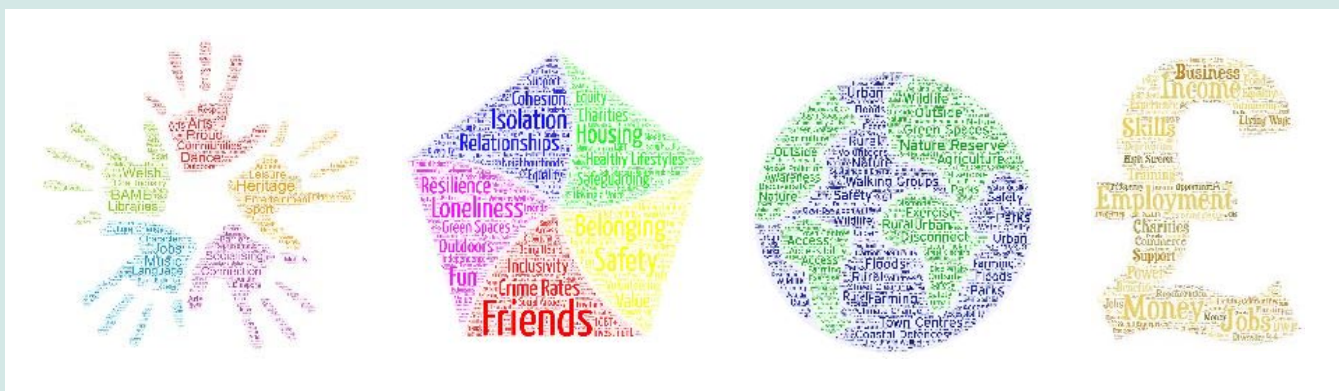
We have been collaborating with Bridgend PSB and the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board to undertake engagement work to inform the PSB's assessment of well-being and the RPB's population needs assessment. Sharing our work in this way has meant that we have tried new ways of engaging with as many different people as we can, shared learnings and maximised opportunities for co-operation between the Boards.

In Merthyr Tydfil, there is collaborative working with Cardiff Metropolitan University as part of a research project focusing on Pen y Dre High School which is in the Gurnos **Community Zone** Area. This work engages Welsh Government to review the future direction of travel for 'Community Focused Schools' and identify and build upon the successes of the current approach in the area.

We have been starting a cultural shift by exploring the supply side potential for social enterprise delivery in advance of social procurement, and 'thinking local first' with a workshop event that brought together the social business sector with procurement professionals. This has come about through working regionally with the Centre for Local Economic Strategies and a project looking at **Building Wealth in Local Communities** and progressive procurement practices. The same work has brought about some changes to procurement practice and influencing national policy.

The CHOICE project offers advice and support to access Long- Acting Reversible Contraception (LARC). It has seen the project increase their services to the most vulnerable women in our communities and expand to include a CHOICE street-based service, supporting homeless clients. CHOICE is now identified within the referral pathways of the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Sexual Assault and Rape Crisis Centre (SARC) and at New Pathways it is part of the pre-release protocol from Eastwood Park Prison and Young Offenders Institution for women aged 18 years and over. It has been integrated with RCT Social Services Department, and a Well Woman Clinic has been introduced aimed at providing tailored support for sex workers in Bridgend. Staff development has been a key success to the project, with two members of the team receiving training to administer a variety of LARC based on individual need, and the team has been extended to include an Outreach Healthcare Support Worker. This expansion of service resulted in over 700 referrals made to the project up to February 2022.

A collaboration of three Local Authorities across Cwm Taf Morgannwg, the Health Board and third sector mental health and substance misuse providers have worked with housing support providers to continue the development of the Specialist Mental Health and Substance Misuse Housing Outreach Service. A Clinical Nurse Specialist (general health) and an Independent Domestic Abuse Advisor (RCT) also link closely with the team to provide a holistic service to individuals who would not access traditional community services. The service takes mental health and substance misuse services directly into the community to individuals with complex needs residing in emergency bed and breakfast, homeless hostels and Housing First provision. The service started in March 2021 and in the year to March 2022, 117 individuals were accepted onto the scheme. Of them, 67 individuals had regular consistent engagement, 11 people had a positive tenancy move on, 47 have been referred to Mind Trauma-Informed Counselling, 27 have achieved a decrease in their substance use and 59 have accessed a GP for the first time. Future plans include accessing further funding to expand and include a prevention element to offer this service to individuals who are under threat of losing their tenancy.



How We Have Worked....

4

LONG TERM... The importance of balancing short-term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to also meet the long-term needs.

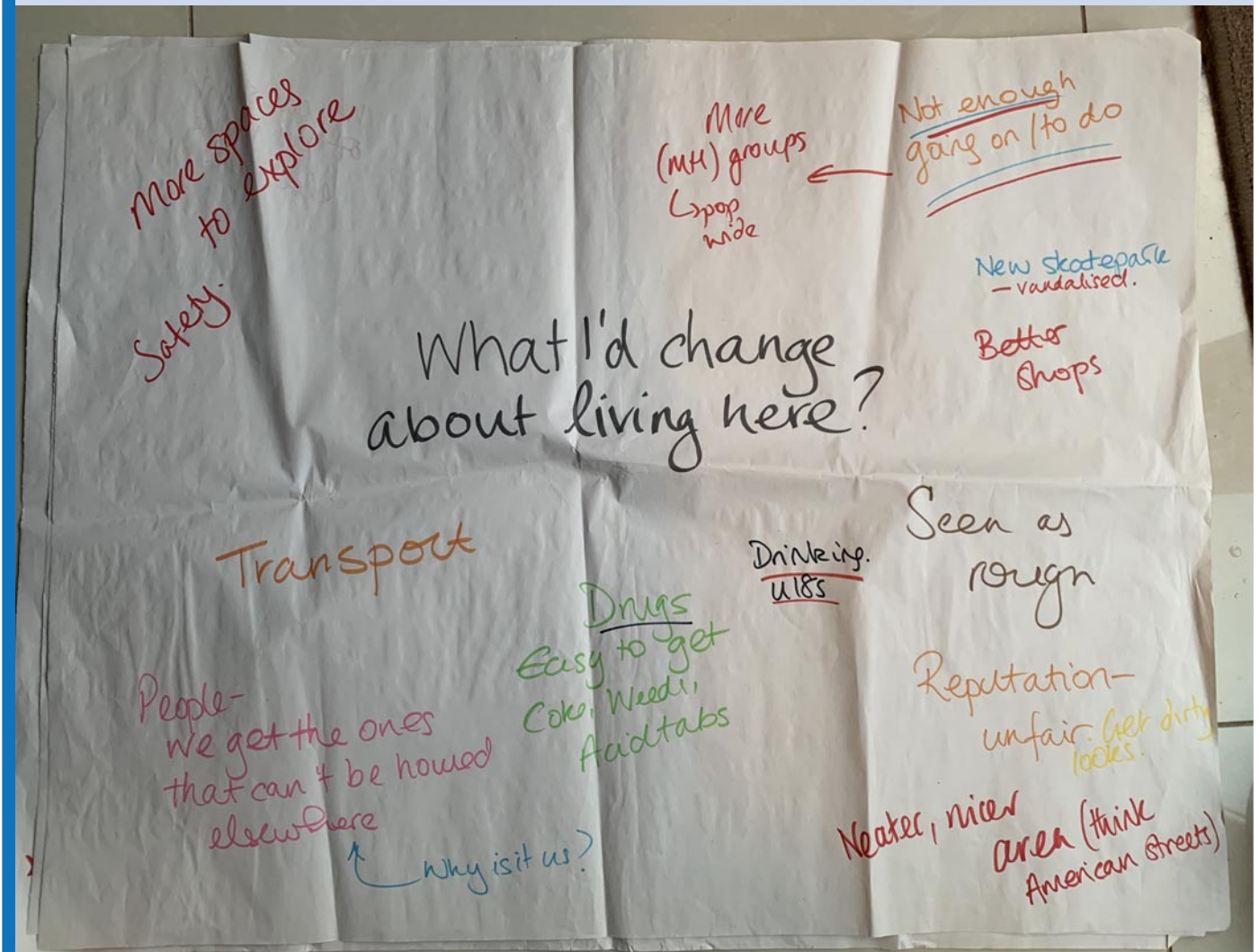


A clear message in our Assessment work was our desire to protect and make the most of our natural spaces. We had a lot of conversations about appreciating our beautiful and unique landscape but also about the challenges and threats, including the **climate and nature emergency** we face as well as the impact of the flooding in 2020 and the legacy of our industrial past. The PSB has been working to understand what is happening already in the region around 'net zero' and becoming carbon neutral, and in developing our regional Well-being Plan we will be considering what we want our environment to look like in the years to come.

The PSB has been supporting Natural Resources Wales's 'Natur a Ni' project to develop a shared vision for the year 2050 and consider the changes we need to make leading up to 2030 and 2050, as individuals and as a country. As part of developing our Well-being Plan, we will be taking up NRW's offer of 'Three Horizon' scanning.

Volunteering played a critical role in helping people during the pandemic, both through receiving and providing support, and we saw an increase in the number of volunteers in Cwm Taf. This has decreased for a variety of reasons, including returning to work after furlough but we also heard experiences of fatigue or 'burn out'. We need to support those giving their time and help recruit new volunteers so that the significant benefits that volunteering brings are sustained and continued.

We used Welsh Government's **Future Trends Report** when drafting our Assessment and will be applying the learning from the Report as we develop our future priorities and Well-being Objectives, examining the drivers and trends. We also carried out a '**Better Futures**' exercise with young people from across Cwm Taf Morgannwg to help consider seeds of change and preferred futures.



How We Have Worked....

5

INVOLVEMENT... The importance of involving people with an interest in achieving the well-being goals and ensuring that these people reflect the diversity of the area which the body serves.



One of the clearest ways that we've involved people in the work of the PSB in the last year is in how we've undertaken our **Well-being Assessment**, and there's more on this in section four.

Involvement has also run through our delivery work with regards to our existing Well-being Objectives, with highlights being:

- outreach work providing vulnerable women with long-acting reversible contraception (LARC), engaging over 700 women and a take-up rate over 50%;
- the Community Focused School work in the Calon Las zone having extensive engagement with organisations working within the Pen Y Dre catchment area including statutory services, voluntary and third sector services, housing associations, parents, and young people themselves, and;
- working to understand how young people cope with emotional and social loneliness and isolation through a co-produced questionnaire, based on the Campaign to End Loneliness and using the young wellbeing ambassadors.

The **Safer Streets** work also has a strong emphasis on engagement. A Youth Service engagement vehicle is used to drive greater engagement by the Community Wellbeing and Resilience Team, providing educational inputs focusing on violence against women and girls and providing a point of refuge for young women and girls at vulnerable public spaces. This is alongside the Street Pastors engagement providing a recognisable safe space and facilitating engagement during the weekends. Engagement with schools is also key: a Healthy Relationship education package for young people is delivered by Community Wellbeing and Resilience Team to school pupils focussing on preventative measures to reduce violence against women and girls, and South Wales Police will design and deliver a Stalking Behaviours educational lesson targeting age group years 7 -11 in Health and Well-being and Personal and Social Education (PSE) classes.

We are committed to improving how we involve communities in our work and decision making and were one of the regions selected to work with Coproduction Network for Wales as part of their **Project Dewi**. We will work with the network for five years (from spring 2021) to try to develop a practice of meaningful engagement and involvement, moving towards full co-production.



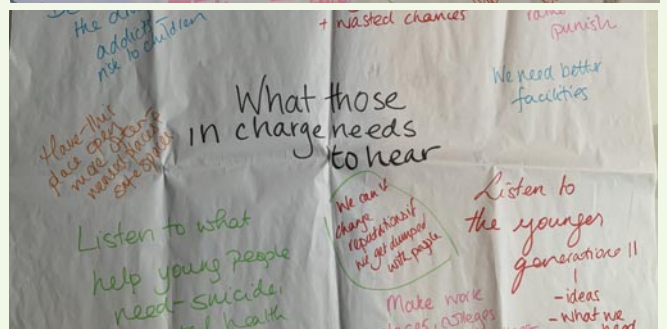
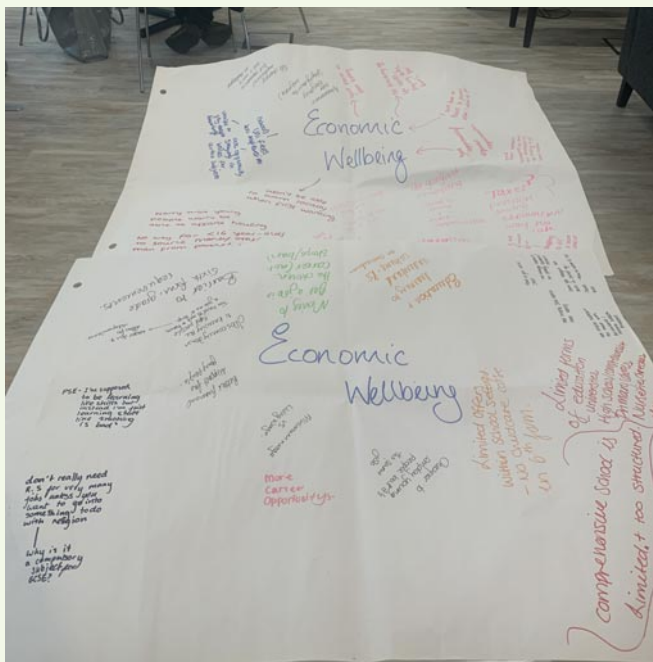
What we have learned

Assessing well-being

Our biggest area of work for this year has been producing an assessment of well-being. This was our second assessment, and there's no doubt that we found a lot of changes from when the work was last carried out in 2016-17. However, we also noted where things remained largely unchanged – including the positives like a strong sense of community as well as the challenges, such as the inequalities we see in the area.

As a region, we've been successful in securing the support of **Co-production Network for Wales** demonstrating our commitment to improve how communicate, engage, and work with the people that live, work and visit Cwm Taf Morgannwg. We've undertaken a broad range of activities to try and speak with as many different people as possible and make sure that our assessment is informed by people's thoughts and words, their priorities, and concerns and where they feel we need to focus to improve well-being.

We drew on and were grateful for the input from communities, partners, and organisations to provide an insight of life in Cwm Taf. Thank you to those people and groups that gave their time or invited us to their sessions and got involved in the work!



- 508 people helped us understand what well-being means to them
- 64 organisations worked together to engage with a diverse range of people
- We had a programme of '100 days of engagement' with the RPB including lots of different types of events, such as hackathons producing music, art and poetry to express well-being in a variety of ways. This was extended to meet with more groups for conversations on what matters to them
- Three 'Better Futures' sessions were held with young people from across the region
- 44 data and information officers helped bring together a wide range of local information to analyse alongside published data reports
- **Seven summary sheets** have been produced covering findings against the pillars of well-being
- When we consulted on the draft Assessment 79% of people agreed or strongly agreed with the messages.

We've combined all the quantitative and qualitative information to create a picture and understanding of the region, and act as an evidence base for building a Cwm Taf Morgannwg of which we are proud.

To read our Assessment please [click here](#).



Next Steps

We will take the learnings from the Well-being Assessment, along with contributions from on-going conversations, stakeholder in-put and support from Welsh Government and the Office of the Future Generations Commissioner to draft regional well-being objectives, and then the Well-being Plan.

Ahead of the Plan's publication, we will also be one merged Cwm Taf Morgannwg Public Services Board covering Bridgend, Merthyr Tydfil, and RCT. The coming months will see us work through the merger process, negotiating integration of priorities across key strategic partnerships, considering the new governance, principles, and culture for the regional Board.



To keep up to date and find out how you can be involved in our work, visit:

www.ourcwmtaf.wales



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